

Remarks

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendment and following remarks. The Specification and claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 15, 17, 18 and 22 have been amended. Claims 2, 4 and 16 have been cancelled and claims 31-38 have been added. Therefore, claims 1, 3, 5-15 and 17-38 are pending in the present application.

The Specification has been amended to correct a reference numeral in the detailed description related to the fasteners. This amendment was not made for reasons related to patentability.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 16-19 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The undersigned contacted the Examiner by telephone on January 23, 2006 to obtain the details of this rejection since no explanation was provided in the present Office Action. During the telephone conference, the Examiner indicated that the claims were mistakenly rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and stated that claims 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 16-19 and 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Therefore, claim 1 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of claims 2 and 4, and claims 2 and 4 were cancelled. Claims 3, 5 and 6 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of original claim 1. Claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations from original claims 1 and 11.

Claim 15 has been rewritten to include the limitations from claim 16, and claim 16 has been cancelled. Claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 15. Claim 18 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations from original claim 15. Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations from original claims 15 and 21.

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,679087 to Suggs et al. ("the Suggs reference"). Claim 2 has been cancelled therefore the rejection to this claim is moot. In light of the amendments set forth above, Applicants submit that the rejection based on the Suggs reference has been overcome. Applicants request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Applicants acknowledge that claims 25-30 have been allowed.

Furthermore, Applicants submit that new claims 31-38 are also not taught or suggested by the Suggs reference.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1, 3, 5-15 and 17-38 are in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner feel that any unresolved issues remain in this case, the undersigned may be contacted at the telephone number listed below to arrange for an issue resolving conference.

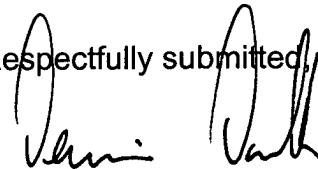
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the \$1000.00 fee for the 5 additional independent claims, the \$250.00 fee for the 5 additional dependent

claims, and any other fee that may have been overlooked, to Deposit Account No.

10-0223.

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Respectfully submitted,



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